

PARKER (W. T.)

A CLOTHING-CASE FOR THE ARMY AND NAVY AND A DEVICE FOR TRANSPORTING THE WOUNDED.

Read before the International Medical Congress at Rome.

BY

W. THORNTON PARKER, M.D.,

GROVELAND, MASS.,

Formerly Acting Assistant Surgeon, United States Army; late Assistant Surgeon M. V. M.



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A CLOTHING-CASE FOR THE ARMY AND NAVY AND A DEVICE FOR TRANSPORTING THE WOUNDED.

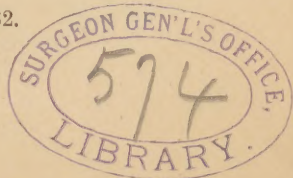
LORD HOWE, the distinguished soldier,¹ who lost his life while serving with Abercrombie in the ill-fated expedition against Ticonderoga, showed great practical knowledge in the care of his troops. He had induced all of the officers to dress like the common soldiers, warned by Braddock's defeat, where the officers were picked out as marks for the bullets. He persuaded the men to cut their hair short, and all were supplied with a pair of gaiters, like those worn by Indian Canadians, and called *mitusses*. *Their haversacks were rolled in a blanket.* They each had thirty pounds of meal, one pound of powder, four pounds of balls, besides their cartridge-boxes full. Their canteens were filled with wine. An army thus equipped would need no magazine for a month. Both officers and men mixed their own meal with a little water, and baked it in cakes by putting it on a flat stone, under the ashes, an arrangement which answered very well for a light expedition. The officers and men had only one shirt apiece, and did their own washing.

During the Franco-Prussian war many regiments transported their extra clothing wrapped in blankets or overcoats and worn slung over the left shoulder. The ends of the overcoat or blanket were secured by straps or cords at the right side. The right arm and shoulder would therefore remain free for the carrying of the rifles, and easy movement for loading, aiming, firing, charging, and other exercises of the soldier could all be promptly executed.²

The different forms of knapsacks which I have examined, although remarkably similar in appearance in the German, Austrian, French, English, Dutch, Italian, Swiss, and American armies, are clumsy, heavy, and too fatiguing for the soldier's use, in peace even, much less useful in time of war. The necessity for the easy transportation of the soldier's kit, by the soldier, is often of the greatest importance when in actual warfare, and liable to long marches, especially when the quartermaster's train has failed,

¹ A History of the French War, Johnson, p. 282.

² Extract from my Manual Red-Cross Drill.



or when the rapid movement of armies is necessary, without the aid of wagons and horses. It was the experience of many army officers during the war of the Rebellion in the United States that soldiers, although provided with the best knapsacks which could be manufactured, invariably threw them away upon long marches, together with the clothing contained in them, rather than endure the fearful physical suffering which resulted from carrying them. Those who were determined to save some extra clothing did so by wrapping it up in the rolled blanket, or overcoat, which they wore over the left shoulder. The knapsack is especially undesirable, because its straps draw heavily against the muscles used in respiration. The tugging of the "pack" impedes the act of respiration very greatly, especially when the body is fatigued. The oppression caused by the weight of the knapsack and its interference with the normal breathing is so great that I have seen soldiers faint away, and even fall in ranks at Sunday morning inspection, after carrying the knapsack only a short time. The distress from the weight of the knapsack often causes a large per cent. of stragglers and sick men before the troops even reach the battle-field. An army is thereby deprived of many men of excellent courage and intelligence who would, by their presence, have aided much in action towards the general success, but whose physical resources were not equal to the dreadful "pack" on their backs. The pressure and contact of the knapsack heats and weakens that portion of the body against which it rests, and, after reaching camp or a halt, its removal exposes the soldier to additional chances of taking cold.

Any one who has witnessed the departure of troops for the war, in what is called heavy marching order, must have noticed countless men already nearly tired out and struggling to keep up appearances, and bear in a soldierly way their "pack." It was an easy matter to estimate how many, from the weight of the knapsack, must soon break down and become useless as fighting men. To remedy some of the defects and dangers which we have been considering, I have devised an "army clothing-case," which very many of the officers of the United States army, and also officers of the army of the Union during the war, have examined and highly approved of. The Newport Medical Society, at the regular monthly meeting held December 2, formally approved of this case, and have recommended it to all army boards for use instead of the knapsack.

The clothing-case of light canvas, invented by the author, weighs only eight and one-half ounces. Three of these can be readily fastened upon rifles, making an excellent stretcher for the transport of the wounded. The case is made of a strip of light canvas four feet six inches long, and sixteen or eighteen inches wide, folded longitudinally, so that a margin of two or more inches is left along one edge for a flap. It is divided transversely into three equal compartments by two sets of stitches. The margin is buttoned over on six buttons, the button-holes being on the flap and the buttons on the farther edge and reverse side of the case. Loops at either

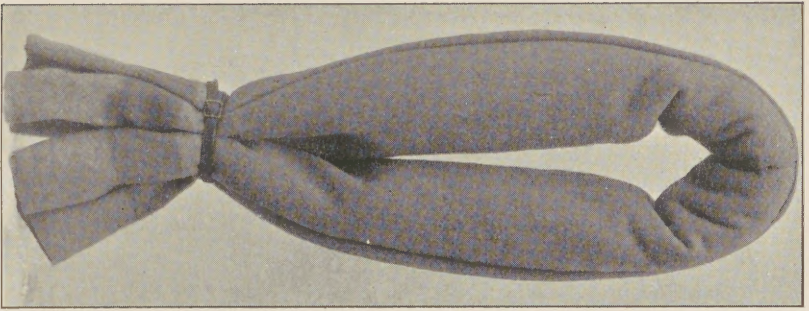


FIG. 1.—Blanket rolled up and tied.

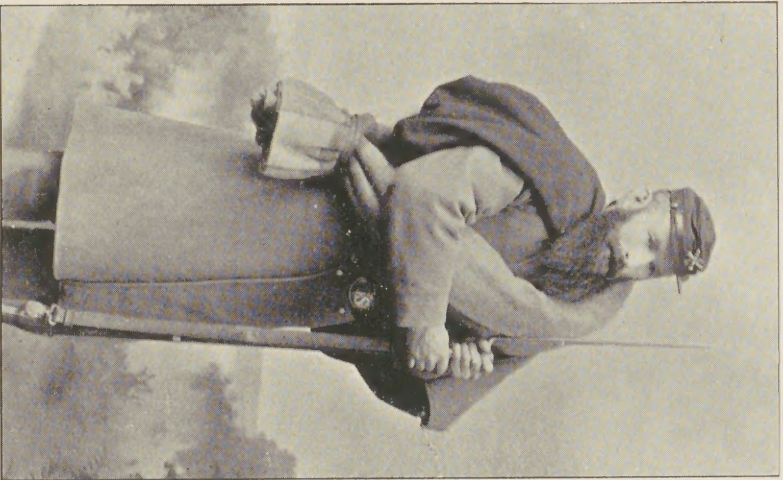


FIG. 2.—Method of carrying blanket (with ~~case~~ Dr. Parker's case) ~~shown in the case~~

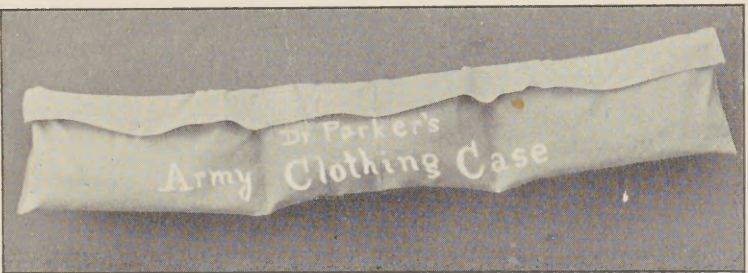


FIG. 3.—Dr. Parker's army clothing case.

Containing Case.

end enable the soldier to wear it securely at the ends without its being rolled in the blanket. The case will hold the ordinary soldier's kit, and it is intended to be worn in the rolled blanket, suspended from the left shoulder, giving the right arm full play, and allowing the utmost freedom in the performance of the most important exercises in the manual of arms.¹ (See illustration.)

The clothing-case does away with the necessity for the heavy and wearisome knapsack. Soldiers will not carry knapsacks, but the clothing-case can be carried for many days without fatigue. The loops already mentioned can be secured by a drawn cord or strap, and the rifles slipped between the folds thus formed will make a most serviceable stretcher.

By direction of the General-in-Chief of the United States army a board of officers was ordered to examine into the merits of this clothing-case in 1890, at Fort Adams, Newport, R. I., and, after careful examination and practical tests, reported favorably for its adoption by the United States army in time of war. It is not suited for "piping times of peace," when show and pomp are more often considered, but for actual service in actual campaigning it is considered the best method. When the soldier reaches a field or post hospital, or is being transported in an ambulance, his clothing-case will provide, when folded, a most welcome and useful pillow. Such clothing-cases could be used either when filled or emptied; if used when the cases are full, just as good a stretcher can be made; and the effects of the soldier, his changes of clothing, etc., are brought directly to the hospital.

Once more it is submitted to the Congress of Medical Men of all Nations, with the hope that it may receive more general commendation and be put to practical test as to its actual value in the field of war.

Anything which lessens the hardships of marching and fighting, and increases the real comfort of soldiers, whether in health or when wounded or invalided, is worthy of the best efforts of the medical profession.

For transport of wounded in the field during active service, I would suggest a light, strong framework, to the cross-pins of which strong netting could be attached. This would be light, and would not be so warm as a canvas or blanket stretcher. Common net-cord hammocks could be issued for stretcher use, and the ends could be placed over the left shoulder of the forward man, and over the right shoulder of the rear man, and held securely at the side. This would do away with any pole, and in many cases would be light, cool, and comfortable. Such hammock-stretchers would take very little room in transportation. Where the regular canvas-stretcher is not obtainable, blankets, knapsacks, overcoats, dresscoats, and trousers can with poles or rifles be made into excellent stretchers.

Referring once more to the clothing-case already described, it has occurred to me that for Red-Cross sergeants on the field no better case could

¹ *Vide* Army and Navy Register, August 15, 1885; Jour. Amer. Med. Association, March 6, 1886; Reference Handbook Med. Science, vol. ~~III~~ p. 722.

be devised for carrying the necessary instruments and appliances to be used in first aid.

The knapsacks, bags, and haversacks, in use in the hospital corps of the European and American armies, are clumsy and very tiresome. The constant stooping and rising positions, assumed by the medical attendants in ministering to the sick, are made doubly irksome by the clumsy and heavy bags and haversacks suspended by a strap, which often cuts deeply into the shoulder of the wearer.

I have devised a case for a Red-Cross sergeant, made in the same fashion but of different material from that used by the soldiers and sailors, who wear theirs inside the rolled blanket. This case is to be made of brown water-proof cloth, secured at the right side by two strong straps. When required for use it can be quickly unslung and opened, and as quickly closed and slung into position again.

The contents are as follows: One hypodermic needle and rubber-stoppered bottle, containing Magendie's solution, morphia, one-half pound absorbent cotton in a flat package; six woven bandages, antiseptic; six first-aid triangular bandages; one case isinglass plaster; one inch tape; one package, in flat wooden box, surgeon's adhesive plaster; three sponges in water-proof bag; two tourniquets, field; two tourniquets, Esmarch; one tin box wax candles and matches, or folding lantern; one Red-Cross sergeant's dressing-case.

This case will be found of great practical convenience, and can be furnished at reasonable expense, and much below the cost of hospital knapsack, bags, and haversacks already in use.¹

¹ Boston Med. and Surg. Journal, March 31, 1888.

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JOHN ASHHURST, JR., M.D., AND JAS. T. WHITTAKER, M.D., LL.D.,

BY

HENRY W. CATTELL. A.M., M.D.

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